

# Regional AGENDA

## METROPOLITAN KING COUNTY COUNCIL

November 2001

### Meeting the Challenge: Council Undertakes Writing 2002 Budget

See Graph below:  
Chart A shows the cost of providing 2001 service levels at 2002 (\$532 million). Chart B shows revenues. The council's challenge is filling the \$41 million gap.

The Metropolitan King County Council is in the midst of one of the most severe budget situations faced by this regional body in decades. The council's task this November is to balance projected costs that outweigh projected revenues by as much as \$45 million.

King County's executive has submitted a plan to spend \$2.9 billion dollars next year. Much of that amount comes from local governments within King County and is dedicated to specific

purposes. The remaining \$486 million is the County's "general fund" – used to pay for services like courts, jails, the sheriff's department, social and health departments, parks, and records and elections.

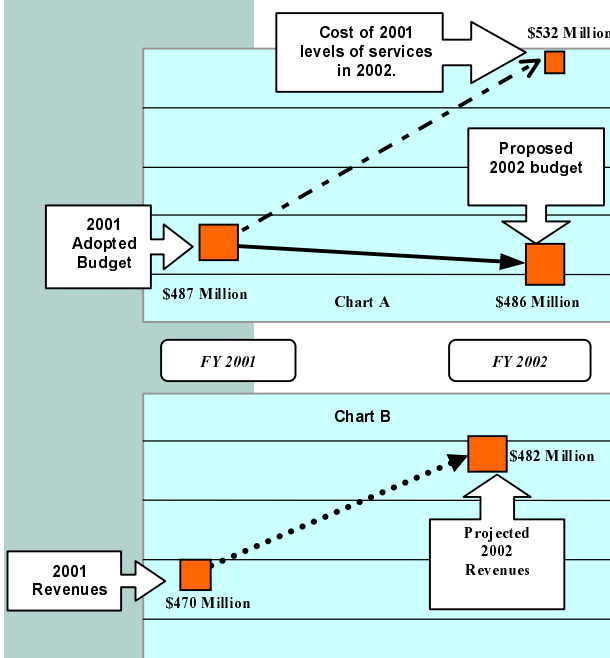
The deficit means difficult

choices for the council. Because projected expenses outweigh revenues by as much as \$45 million, councilmembers must find savings, create efficiencies, or locate other sources of revenue to meet the difference.

Budget Committee Chair Rob McKenna says the deficit didn't arrive overnight. "The reality of this year's budget challenge is that for too long, the County's expenses have outpaced our revenues. In times of seeming unending prosperity the County appeared fine. The reality has now set in – this year's economic slowdown only exacerbates an already difficult situation," said McKenna.

Budget Committee Capital Budget Panel Chair Larry Phillips says the choices run deeper than a one-time, one-year fix. "Because of my colleagues' repeated unwillingness to even *consider* the revenue side of the County budget, we are forced to reduce core services provided by county government," said Phillips. "They like to talk about 'cutting taxes,' but they don't like cutting services. Well, that moment has now arrived."

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Metropolitan King County Council • Room 1200 King County Courthouse • 516 Third Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104-3272

District 1	Maggi Fimia	296-1001	District 6	Rob McKenna	296-1006	District 11	Jane Hague	296-1011
District 2	Cynthia Sullivan	296-1002	District 7	Pete von Reichbauer	296-1007	District 12	David Irons	296-1012
District 3	Louise Miller	296-1003	District 8	Greg Nickels	296-1008	District 13	Les Thomas	296-1013
District 4	Larry Phillips	296-1004	District 9	Kent Pullen	296-1009	General Phone		296-1000
District 5	Dwight Pelz	296-1005	District 10	Larry Gossett	296-1010	TTY / TDD		296-1024

## Council Receives Briefings on Bioterrorism

### Public Health Officials Say County Leads Nation in Preparedness

The terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> have raised many questions and concerns among citizens all across the nation as to the state of preparedness. Taking a regional approach to the question, the Metropolitan King County Council's Committee-of-the-Whole called for a briefing from public health officials on the region's preparedness for chemical or biological attacks.

"It's our responsibility to ensure regional preparedness in the event of what used to be the unthinkable: bioterrorism," said council Chair Pete von Reichbauer. "This month, President Bush swore in the nation's first Homeland Security chief. Just as former Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge accepts his task on the federal level, we must engage in planning and preparedness on the local level."

Officials from the Public Health Department for

Seattle and King County told councilmembers that the impact of certain biological agents could be very severe but that this region is leading the nation in preparedness. King County has a biological emergency response team, procedures for investigating and responding to suspicious infections, and a plan for the distribution of medications, if necessary. The County continues to work on areas of public and health provider education.

"We're entering a new age with a new vocabulary of words like anthrax, bioterrorism, and syndromic surveillance. It is with great sadness that we accept our role in preparing for such nightmarish possibilities," said von Reichbauer. "I can report to citizens that what we heard from our public health officials assures me that King County is ready to face this new challenge."

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## Council Receives Finalists for Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant



*Councilmember David Irons addresses a question during a public hearing.*

***Then there were two.*** The Metropolitan King County Council is entering the final stages of the selection process for the region's new wastewater treatment plant - Brightwater.

An advisory committee has narrowed the list of potential sites from five to two. The council must now decide whether to accept the former Unocal tank farm in Edmonds and an industrial area north of Woodinville on Route 9 as the finalists for siting the \$850 million facility.

"We're working with a very narrow timeline in the selection of the final site," said Larry Phillips, chair of the Natural Resources, Parks and Open Space Committee. "The north King County-south Snohomish County areas continue to grow rapidly, and they need infrastructure to keep up with our

growing population. We have adopted the policy of "growth paying for growth" to ensure new residents pay for new facilities. Whichever site is ultimately selected, the facility will serve new residents, so they should pay for the increased demand."

This spring, the council approved five sites for consideration. The Brightwater Siting Advisory Committee then held a series of public hearings. After weighing citizen comments, site benefits, and input from the Metropolitan Water Pollution Abatement Advisory Committee and Snohomish County officials, the advisory committee passed two final site recommendations on to the council.

The next step in the selection process will be a series of hearings to allow for more public

# Full Council, Committee-of-the-Whole Meet in Redmond

In order to bring county government closer to the people it serves, the council's Committee-of-the-Whole continues its tradition of holding meetings outside of the Courthouse – most recently meeting at Clise Mansion at Marymoor Park in Redmond.

The committee has been meeting once a month in various locations of King County for almost two years under the leadership of Chairman Pete von Reichbauer. While a field meeting of the Committee-of-the-Whole is not unusual, von Reichbauer took the practice a step further and held the full council meeting at Redmond's city council chambers.

"The idea to conduct a full council meeting outside of the Courthouse has been discussed and promoted for quite some time," said von Reichbauer. "I decided it was finally time to do it."

The September 24<sup>th</sup> meeting was the first official meeting of the full council outside of the King County Courthouse in more than 15 years.

"The off-site meeting was a success in more ways than one," said von Reichbauer. "First,

it proved we could legally discuss and adopt legislation outside of the Courthouse. Secondly, it brought out a good number of members of the public, – citizens who otherwise might not have attended had our meeting been held in downtown Seattle."

They didn't know it at the time, but members were proving the council's ability to continue conducting County business in the event of a major disaster. The King County Charter requires that in the event of a major emergency and where the Courthouse Chambers are inaccessible, the council meet off-site to authorize certain legislation so that county government can continue functioning.



*Councilmembers (from left to right) Kent Pullen, Larry Gossett, Cynthia Sullivan, Jane Hague, Louise Miller, Larry Phillips, David Irons, Pete von Reichbauer, and Rob McKenna gather together following the meeting in Redmond.*

## Council Undertakes Writing 2002 Budget

Continued from page 1

Some of the toughest budget questions will land on those departments responsible for enhancing the quality of life in King County. The Office of Cultural Resources could see their operating budget reduced by 62 percent.

Budget Development and Analysis Panel Chair Jane Hague has focused discussions for the past year on growth of government. "Rising rates of overhead and administrative costs need to be identified and contained if we are to continue providing services to our constituents," said Hague. "Prioritizing our

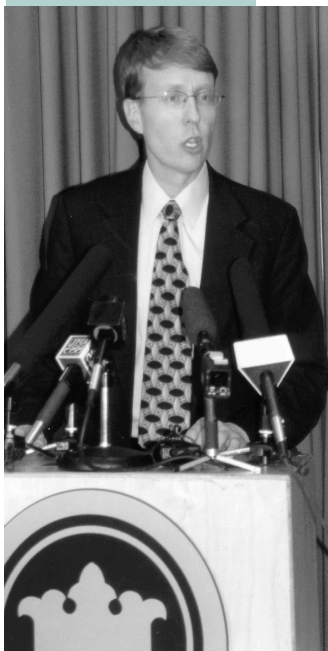
precious tax resources is our fiduciary responsibility."

McKenna points out that the council can and will *meet the challenge*. "We're tasked with making the difficult decisions and certainly, we have some difficult choices ahead."

The council has been working on amending the county executive's proposed budget since mid-October. The council's aim is to adopt a final budget package before Thanksgiving.

## Regional 911 Center on Schedule to Come Online

Ensuring that critical communications systems can remain online in the event of a regional disaster, the Metropolitan King County Council has approved an accelerated construction schedule for a regional emergency communications center.



*Councilmember Rob McKenna discusses his support of construction of the county's new Emergency Communications Center.*

In the moments following the Nisqually Earthquake last February it became clear that King County needed an emergency operations center that was in a structurally sound and central location. Plans for such a center were already in the works but the council wanted those plans accelerated. To meet the need, councilmembers waived some of the typical and time-consuming process by declaring an emergency. Under the accelerated timeline, the center is now scheduled for completion by August of 2003.

Even though the February earthquake demonstrated the clear need for a well-placed regional emergency center, the council did not act hastily. Only after councilmembers were confident the center could be completed on time and on budget, did the council unanimously approve the final \$27 million necessary for the accelerated schedule and project completion.

"Although the mission of the Comm Center is clear, we have had continuing questions about issues related to efficiency, reliability, and adequacy," said Budget Committee Chair Rob McKenna. "After thorough review, I am confident the plans for this center responsibly balance staffing requirements with the County's disaster preparedness needs. The plan is on track to remain within budget and on the projected timeline."

Once constructed, the Renton facility will offer permanent replacement facilities for both the Sheriff's 911 Communications Center and the County's emergency management offices, which are vulnerable in the event of a strong earthquake. Currently, operations are located in two buildings – the King County Courthouse and the 7300 Building at King County International Airport. Both facilities would be significantly challenged in the event of a sizable earthquake.

Under the existing project schedule, the construction portion of the project is scheduled to go out to bid near the end of this year. Construction of the Regional Communication and Emergency Coordination Center (RCECC) is scheduled to begin in January 2002 and the center is scheduled to be on line by August 2003.

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## Council Welcomes Expanded Transit Service

The most recent set of council-approved transit improvements added 77,000 additional hours

increased peak hour service but fewer diesel coaches.



of bus service. Among the improvements is the expansion of trolley service on Beacon Hill's route 36. Trolley service has been extended 1.3 miles, from South Dawson street to South Othello street. The expansion comes at the

request of the community residents who wanted

Pictured at left is Councilmember Larry Gossett (seated) with Jim Boon, the head of Metro Transit's Vehicle Maintenance Division. The two are on board one of Metro's new trolleys. Gossett joined Metro officials in celebrating the expansion of trolley service on Beacon Hill, part of the 77,000 hours of transit improvements. "Local residents told us what they needed, and we worked to meet that need," said Gossett.



# Conservation Futures Fund Preserves Open Space, Forest and Habitat in King County

As King County's population continues to surge, especially in outlying suburban areas, the preservation of remaining open space, forest, and natural habitat is an important goal for the County Council.

The Conservation Futures fund, a program dedicated to the acquisition and purchase of open space, agricultural, and timber lands, was created by the council in the early 1990's. "Preserving land for parks, forest, farms, and habitat helps protect our environment while providing recreational opportunities for everyone," said Natural Resources, Parks and Open Space Chairman Councilmember Larry Phillips. "Whether the land is a park in an urban neighborhood, or salmon and wildlife habitat in rural King County, keeping land open not only helps keep our region green, but healthy as well."

The Conservation Futures Fund is supported by a countywide property tax of \$0.625 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The annual allocation is based on the recommendation of a citizen oversight committee. King County government and incorporated city governments are the primary applicants for these funds, but citizen groups and individual

citizens can apply after demonstrating the local jurisdiction is committed to helping acquire the open space.

"From chinook habitat in the Cedar River Watershed, to property in the Rainier Valley and on Vashon Island, these funds help protect our precious open space," said Councilmember Greg Nickels. "It helps ensure that future generations will have green space to use and enjoy."

Among the recommended projects: the acquisition of development rights that will protect the Ames Lake Forest which overlooks the Snoqualmie River, protection of salmon habitat on the Green and Tolt rivers, and assisting in the purchase of the historic Tollgate Farm in North Bend.

"The biggest beneficiaries of this program are the communities where the land is located," said Councilmember Louise Miller. "The willingness of community residents to take a long-term view and to work toward preserving these properties is commendable."



*Councilmember Louise Miller is an advocate of preserving salmon habitat in King County.*

## Regional Wastewater Treatment Plan Finalists

Continued from page 4

input, discussion with local government officials and the residents of the communities surrounding the final sites, and environmental and technical reviews.

"We are preparing to build a facility that is likely to be operating a century from now," said Utilities and Technology Committee Chair David Irons. "The evaluation process must take into account both the technology available and the concerns of the communities. Getting to work on this facility as quickly as possible depends on forming a

partnership with the communities around Brightwater."

Council-approved plans call for Brightwater's treatment capacity to open at thirty-six million gallons a day, with a future expansion to 54 million gallons.

The \$850 million facility will serve north King and south Snohomish counties and is scheduled to begin operation in 2010. The council is expected to make a final decision on where Brightwater is located in 2003.

# Growth Pays For Growth

## Council Adopts 30-year Plan for Region's Sewer Infrastructure

The Metropolitan King County Council recently adopted landmark legislation that sets a 30-year policy for paying for new sewer infrastructure while ensuring fairness among ratepayers in the entire region.

Regional Water Quality Committee Chair Louise Miller calls the action important for the future of the region in setting firm policy to ensure that new growth pays for new infrastructure.

"We approved a fee methodology that ensures that growth pays for growth – now, and in the future," said Miller. "The Regional Water Quality Committee, whose members represent suburban cities, sewer districts, city of Seattle, and King County, arrived at this policy unanimously signifying a strong working partnership with King County's regional leaders."

The policy:

- Sets the capacity charge at a minimum of 95 percent of projected costs of *new facilities* needed to serve *new customers*.
- Ensures customers already receiving sewer service will not be charged for new treatment facilities being built for those new customers.

- Establishes annual council review of capacity charge to ensure fairness.
- Ensures a comprehensive evaluation of projected costs—including inflation, will take place every three years.

Earlier this year, the council set the 2002 capacity charge at \$17.20. Based on projected costs, the capacity charge for 2003 is estimated at \$17.60. Both of these charges are lower than the early proposals thus saving customers money for the new sewer facilities.

"This plan lays sturdy, financial groundwork necessary for regional growth," said Miller. "Given the rapid increase in King County's population, 'growth pays for growth' must be the call of the day as we implement this 30 year plan."

"As regional leaders, we want to encourage responsible growth," Miller said. "Capping the capacity charge at 95 percent of estimated capital project costs allows the County to build the infrastructure necessary to handle the growth, while at the same time retaining system-wide fairness so that all who benefit share in the costs."

## 2002 Means New Faces on the County Council

Familiar faces are leaving the council at the end of this year. The turnover means the end of a long and successful political career for Louise Miller, and a pause in political pursuits for Maggi Fimia.

**Council vice Chair Louise Miller** joined the council in 1994 after serving six terms in the state Legislature. Asked about her proudest accomplishments, Miller lists forming the County's agriculture commission, expanding the one-percent for the arts program, preserving parks and open spaces, and chairing the Regional Water Quality committee during the setting of major policy.

"The work completed by the committee this year is especially pleasing," said Miller. "Unanimous decisions on a sewer rate increase and a capacity charge that will pay for new infrastructure leave the County well-prepared to move forward on major initiatives to serve our communities."

"Achievements in all of these areas involved cooperative, multi-jurisdictional planning and well-laid policy decisions," said Miller.

Miller says she will now focus on her six grandchildren and take more trips with her



*Councilmember Maggi Fimia will return to the private sector at the end of this year.*

## Council request preserves Cedar River acreage

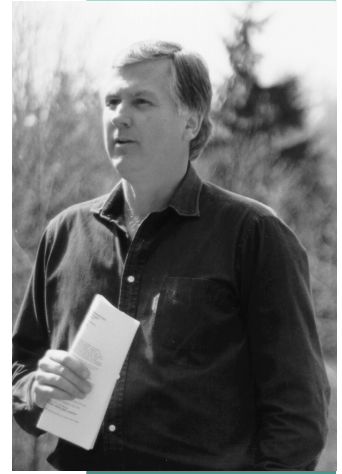
It's one of the quality habitats located along the lower Cedar River, and the County Council has ensured the preservation of the Belmondo Reach Extension by requesting the executive transfer ownership of County-owned property from the Department of Transportation to the Department of Natural Resources.

The Department of Transportation owns an 8-acre parcel within the extension, including a 1300-foot strip along the Cedar River that cuts through a floodplain. It's a wildlife corridor that is used by deer, elk and bear. Coho, steelhead, sockeye and resident trout also use the property. The acquisition of the extension was considered the highest priority of the Cedar River Legacy Program.

"This is a vital section of the Cedar River and King County owns it," said Councilmember Larry Phillips, chair of the Council's Natural Resources, Parks and Open Space Committee. "Even as the County continues to grow, our goal continues to be protecting natural resources, including preserving precious rural land and wildlife habitat."

The Department of Transportation needs only a portion of the property they own to replace an existing bridge and access road. To prevent the possibility of development on the unused property, the council requested the executive not surplus the property and retain county ownership. Their recommendation is that the executive compensate the Department of Transportation's road fund for acquisition of the property and transfer custodianship of the land to the Department of Natural Resources by the end of the year.

"This was an opportunity to protect a pristine stretch of riverfront for salmon and wildlife," said Phillips. "Growth and sprawl continues to put pressure on our natural resources. The Belmondo Reach transfer was a creative solution to a complex problem. We provided the Department of Transportation with the land it needs for road improvements, while protecting our salmon and wildlife for generations into the future."



*Councilmember Larry Phillips works with local environmental groups to preserve and protect the natural habitat of fish and wildlife.*

## 2002 Means New Faces on the County Council

*Continued from page 6*

husband of 41 years. Asked about political plans, Miller says she will limit her board participation to two non-paid positions – one in the arts, and one in dealing with natural resources.

**Councilmember Maggi Fimia** also joined the council in 1994. Her proudest accomplishments include creating the Interurban Trail and adding 20 percent more Metro bus service by purchasing environmentally responsible *clean diesel* buses instead of natural gas buses. Fimia also promoted livable communities, held small grants workshops, formed the Citizens Transit Advisory Committee, and promoted environmentally responsible building during the churches/schools in the rural area debate.

When she announced she would be leaving office, Fimia said it was so that she could spend more time with her daughters. "I can run for office again someday, but I can never get these last years back with my children," said Fimia. "It's also important that policy makers spend time in both public and private life so as to not lose *the constituent's perspective*."

**Councilmember Les Thomas** will leave the position he was appointed to in April of this year. Thomas did not advance from the September 2001 primary election and therefore, District 13 will receive new representation after the November General Election. Thomas will return to the private sector, while remaining active in regional politics.



*Councilmember Les Thomas, Council District 13, will remain active in regional politics.*

# What's Been Happening...



*Councilmembers presented a certificate of recognition to members of the Puget Sound Urban Search and Rescue team to honor them for assisting in the relief efforts in New York City, following the World Trade Center attacks.*

*Councilmembers thanked the Mariners Wives organization for their community service contributions to the Mariners Care Foundation, which recently held a silent auction with proceeds going to benefit the American Red Cross Relief Fund. Pictured (front and center) are Mariners Wives Annie Wilson and Karen Moyer; behind Moyer (on right) is Howard Lincoln, President and CEO of the Mariners Club.*



The information in this newsletter is available in alternate format upon request. Alternate format includes braille, large print, and/or audio. For more information, please call 296-0360, or TDD/TTY at 296-1024.

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**AGENDA**  
*By: [signature]*

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